

# NEWSLETTER

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY**



## NCA MEETS WITH SOUTH DAKOTA PARTNERS TO DISCUSS STATE CEMETERY

Leaders of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, Stockwell Engineering, South Dakota Office of State Engineering, Bureau of Finance and Management and the South Dakota Veterans Council gathered in Sioux Falls last week for the kick-off meeting on the design for the new proposed state veterans cemetery.

The group reviewed and discussed the NCA Grant program and process, project budget and schedule, site analysis, and reviewed the master plan charrettes.



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Resource Military Fair .....	2
Welcome Home for Soldiers .....	2
VA Town Hall .....	3
USS SD Commissioning .....	3
Corn Palace Murals .....	4
Korean Peace Medal .....	4
VA Employment Partnerships .....	5
SDNG Clothing/Toy Drive .....	6
Bonus Checks .....	7
Veterans Day Salute .....	7
Rush to Honor Veterans .....	8
Sea of Goodwill .....	9
Veteran Stand Down .....	10
VA Pension Amendments .....	11
Veterans and Families Month .....	12
Upcoming Events .....	13

# SIoux FALLS MILITARY APPRECIATION RESOURCE FAIR AND CARNIVAL

Partners in Sioux Falls will be participating in the “Bridging the Gap Festival” with a goal to develop a community of care for veteran and military families. The festival will be held Friday, January 18, 2019, from 10:00 am - 9:00 pm (CT) at the Central Church on Ralph Rogers Road.

The second half of the event will focus on celebrating veteran and military families through a night devoted just to them. Food, entertainment, support, and fun activities A one-stop-shop resource fair will be held during that same time. The resource fair and family carnival with dinner is planned from 5:30—9:00 pm. This will be food and fun with a purpose!

Operation Engage America offers support, awareness, education, and resources to veter-



ans, first responders, and their families. While they emphasize those living with Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), this resource fair provides a wide range of resources to ensure that every veteran, service member and community member has the opportunity to become a thriving member of society.

SDDVA and SDJF will play a role in this great event.

## WELCOME HOME FOR RAPID CITY SOLDIERS

A welcome home ceremony for 89 soldiers with the South Dakota Army National Guard's Company C, 1-189th Aviation Regiment is scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 4, at 1 p.m. at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Theatre.

The public is encouraged to attend the event as the Rapid City-based unit returned home in September after a nearly year-long deployment to the Middle East.

While deployed, the unit provided aerial medical evacuation support with HH-60M Black Hawk helicopters to U.S. military and coalition forces in the region.

Planned speakers for the ceremony include Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general.

# SENATOR ROUNDS ATTENDS SIOUX FALLS VA TOWN HALL

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System hosted a 'Veterans Town Hall' last week in Sioux Falls. Presenters included SFVAHCS Director Darwin Goodspeed, VISN 23 Director Robert McDivitt, and Senator Mike Rounds.

Director Goodspeed updated attendees on the Mission Act and the Caregiver program. VISN23 Director McDivitt talked about the process of hiring a new VA hospital director and the mission act as well. Senator Rounds updated attendees on federal legislation and programs.

SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman provided an update on the State Veterans Cemetery.



# USS SOUTH DAKOTA COMMISSIONING DATE SET

Secretary of the Navy, Richard V. Spencer, announced USS SOUTH DAKOTA will be commissioned on February 2nd, 2019, in Groton, CT.

The ceremony marks the beginning of the submarine's service in the Navy's Fast Attack Fleet. USS SOUTH DAKOTA is expected to be in service for the next three decades. Tickets for the commissioning can be requested at <http://www.SSN790.org>. Events to celebrate the commissioning are planned for Thursday, January 31<sup>st</sup> and Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup> leading up the commissioning on Saturday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019.





# DEDICATION HELD FOR CORN PALACE MURALS

Last Friday, South Dakota's Corn Palace was the place to gather and pay tribute to the men and women that serve and have served this great country. The theme for the 2019 murals is "A Salute to Military."

Speakers for the dedication were S.D. National Guard Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, Retired Navy Captain Deb Bodensadt of the USS South Dakota commissioning committee, Corn Palace Director Scott Schmidt, and Mayor Bob Everson.

Following the ceremony numerous veterans rode a lift up to the unfinished USS South Dakota submarine mural to nail an ear



# LINCOLN COUNTY PRESENTED KOREAN AMBASSADOR PEACE MEDAL TO KLINGHAGEN

The family of Korean War Veteran Roger Klinghagen gathered in Lennox this weekend to honor their special hero.

Lincoln County VSO Susan Irons had been working with Roger on some of his benefits and discovered this hero had never been presented the Korean Ambassador Peace Medal. Irons worked with the family to insure this hero was honored.

Klinghagen is the father-in-law to Todd Otterberg, Physician Recruiter for the VABHHCS. Otterberg had the distinct honor to present the medal to Roger.



# VA JOINS MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) announced it is advancing employment opportunities for military spouses by joining the Department of Defense (DOD) Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP).

MSEP is a career program connecting military spouses with more than 390 affiliated employers who have committed to recruit, hire, promote and retain military spouses in portable careers.

"By developing skills, knowledge, and abilities that can be used in high-demand industry sectors, military spouses – especially those who face frequent relocations – can achieve employment continuity and increased opportunities for upward career mobility," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

"BVA is committed to delivering better services to veterans and their families, and we understand that military spouses offer unique perspectives that can help us deliver on our promise to care for veterans."



The Board's mission is to conduct hearings and decide appeals properly and in a timely manner. The MSEP is part of the DOD's broader Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO) program, which seeks to reduce the 23 percent unemployment rate experienced by military spouses and 25 percent wage gap experienced by military wives. SECO provides education and career guidance to military spouses worldwide and offers free, comprehensive resources and tools related to career exploration; education; training and licensing; employment readiness; and career connections. SECO also offers free career-coaching services six days a week.

To learn more about SECO, visit [Military OneSource](#) or call 800-342-9647 to speak to a SECO career coach.

# SDNG WINTER CLOTHING AND TOY DRIVE

Volunteer members of the South Dakota National Guard are organizing a 2018 winter clothing/toy drive to benefit needy individuals located in their communities. New or gently used coats, gloves, hats, scarves or blankets -- new or gently used toys--for adults and children -- are being donated by Guard members to help the most impoverished in need of warm clothing this winter season. The clothing/toy drive is not limited to only volunteer members of the Guard, but is intended as a community activity.

Members of the public who'd like to donate items are encouraged to bring winter clothes or toys to any SDNG Armory or the Sioux Falls Air National Guard base from now until December 10. The all-volunteer effort to collect winter clothing/toys, while not an official function of the National Guard, is a welcome adjunct activity showcasing volunteers' commitment to serve some of South Dakota's most needy people.



Aberdeen Armory  
115 South Roosevelt Street

Belle Fourche Armory  
1202 Lawrence Street

Brookings Readiness Center  
300 5th Street South

Chamberlain Armory  
202 East Kellam Street

De Smet Armory  
403 3rd Street Southwest

Ellsworth Air Force Base  
1319 Kenny Rd.—Building 1012

Flandreau Armory  
710 West Community Drive

Fort Meade  
54 Sheridan Road

Huron Armory  
1030 3rd Street Southwest

Madison Armory  
1302 N. Washington Avenue

Milbank Armory  
1001 East Park Avenue

Mobridge Armory  
1014 Airport Road

Mitchell Armory  
5501 Airport Road

Parkston Armory  
102B South Chapman Drive

Pierre Armory  
3440 East Highway 34

Rapid City – Camp Rapid  
2823 West Main Street

Rapid City – Range Road Armory  
3740 Range Road

Spearfish Armory  
1200 University Street

Sioux Falls Armory  
801 West National Guard Drive

Joe Foss Field – Sioux Falls  
1201 West Algonquian Street

Sturgis Armory  
12930 Highway 34 East

Vermillion Armory  
603 Princeton Street

Wagner Armory  
600 East Highway 46

Watertown Readiness Center  
1951 N. Hwy 20

Yankton Armory  
204 West 31st Street

# SDDVA PRESENTS BONUS CHECK

SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman and Field Service Officer Will Huffmon had the distinct honor this week to present a bonus check to Desert Storm Veteran Robert Puetz of Rapid City.

Good reminder to all of us to double-check with veterans to make sure all who qualify have made application and received their bonus! For qualifying dates visit: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/benefits/State/Veterans%20Bonus.aspx> or call Jeri Smith at 605.773.7251.



# SD DOT TO SALUTE VETERANS ON DIGITAL BILLBOARDS

South Dakota Department of Transportation will post the following message, "Veterans save lives. Protect yours, buckle up." This message will be on all digital billboards along I-90 and I-29 in South Dakota on Sunday, November 11.







# MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT

## NOVEMBER 10TH

**CALL 716-7825 TO ORDER TICKETS WITH SPECIAL  
PRICING FOR ACTIVE MILITARY AND VETERANS!  
OR TEXT *MILITARY* TO 605-716-7825 FOR MORE  
INFORMATION!**



# PAINT THE ICE ON THURSDAY NIGHT, 11/8 6PM TO 8PM

Promises to be a great night of fun. Rush will be honoring our own special hero, Medal of Honor Recipient, "Michael J. Fitzmaurice. Numerous dignitaries from South Dakota Departments of Veterans Affairs and Military will also play a role on the recognition/appreciation program. On November 8, you can paint the names of your super hero veterans on the ice.





The Watertown Sea of Goodwill is excited to sponsor the  
2nd Annual *Sea of Goodwill Equine Experience Retreat* for our Heroes  
Post 9/11 Veterans and Service Members and their families.

***The Sea of Goodwill Equine Experience Retreat***  
**November 11-12, 2018**  
**Joy Ranch**  
**Watertown, SD**

The retreat begins at noon on Sunday and ends at noon on Monday. *The Sea of Goodwill Equine Experience Retreat* is valued at \$335 for a family of 4 and \$370 for a family of 5. However, this awesome experience is completely **FREE** and **AVAILABLE** to the first 16 Veteran or Military Service Families who register for the retreat by **October 31, 2018**. *The Sea of Goodwill Equine Experience Retreat* includes:

- Veteran or Service Member Equine Experiences
- Retreat Room
- Dinner on Sunday Evening
- Breakfast on Monday Morning
- 2 Family Activities while their Veteran or Service Member is engaged in an Equine Experience
- 1 Family Activity of choice when all 16 families are together.


Reserve your retreat today! Call Joy Ranch at (605)-886-4622 or email [morgan@losd.org](mailto:morgan@losd.org)  
or register online at <http://www.losd.org/events-retreats/joy-ranch/sea-of-goodwill-retreat.html>



# VETERAN STAND DOWN & RESOURCE FAIR



**November 8, 2018**  
**10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**  
**Rushmore Plaza**  
**Civic Center**



## SERVICES OFFERED

Lunch  
Employment Services  
Clothing  
Legal Assistance

VA Benefits  
Readjustment Counseling  
Housing Referrals  
Much More!

\* Please bring a copy of your DD214, dependent information, and identification to the event. Documentation is needed so we can fully serve you and your needs.

For questions contact VA Black Hills:  
Jamison Hild at: 605-490-8587

**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Black Hills Health Care System

# VA AMENDS REGULATIONS ON VA PENSION AND OTHER NEEDS-BASED PROGRAMS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently amended its regulations governing entitlements to VA pension and Parents' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, which are need-based programs.

"The amended regulations bring consistency to the pension process and ensure benefits are available for veterans and survivors with financial need," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "They will help maintain the integrity of and provide clarity to our needs-based pension program."

The VA's pension program provides monthly benefit payments to eligible wartime veterans and their survivors with financial need.

The pension regulations, which were updated Oct. 18, cover the following:

- Establish a clear net-worth limit for income and assets for veterans to qualify for pension,
- Establish a 36-month look-back period to review asset transfers at less than fair market value that reduce net worth and create pension entitlement,
- Establish up to a five-year penalty period to be calculated based on the portion of the **covered assets** that would have made net worth excessive, and
- Updates medical expense definitions for consistency with VA internal guidelines.

The changes are intended to ensure VA only pays benefits to those veterans with a genuine need. For more information on VA's pension program, visit [www.benefits.va.gov/PENSION/](http://www.benefits.va.gov/PENSION/).





# VABHHCS TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES MONTH

Yesterday evening, President Donald Trump declared November 2018 the second annual National Veterans and Military Families Month to “salute the brave and dedicated patriots who have worn the uniform of the United States, and to celebrate the extraordinary military families whose selfless service and sacrifice make our military the finest in the world.”

Beginning in 2017, President Trump proclaimed November Veterans and Military Families Month, marking the first time America celebrated Veterans and military families for the entire month and not just on Veterans Day, in keeping with the President’s strong focus on improving care and benefits to our nation’s heroes.

That tradition continues again this year with more than 300 events at VA hospitals, benefits offices and cemeteries across the country, including: senior leader visits to VA facilities, open houses, town halls, benefits claims clinics, volunteer recognitions, homeless Veteran initiative events, suicide prevention events, faith-based community events, and tributes at national cemeteries.

The VA Black Hills Health Care System will hold the following events honoring Veterans and their families throughout the month of November:

- A Day of Prayer and Reflection for Veterans on November 1<sup>st</sup> at 2:00 pm in the Peace Chapel, Building 148 at the Fort Meade Campus
- Veteran Stand Down and Resource Fair on November 8<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City
- Caregiver Informational Fair on November 9<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Journey Museum in Rapid City
- Coffee with the Director on November 15<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am to 10:00 am in Building 145, Room 108 at the Fort Meade Campus
- Coffee with the Director on November 16<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm in Building 12, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Waiting Room on the Hot Springs Campus

This year’s celebration of Veterans and Military Families Month caps an [unprecedented period of improvement for VA](#), as the department has made groundbreaking progress over the last two years in the areas of accountability, transparency and efficiency across the department while enjoying an important series of legislative successes.

“We look forward to seeing Veterans and their families at one of the many events scheduled throughout the month of November. These events are great opportunities to learn more about VA health care and benefits,” said Sandra Horsman, Director, VA Black Hills Health Care System.

The full list of national events for Veterans and Military Families month is available [at this link](#). For more details about local events please visit the VA Black Hills Health Care System Website calendar of events [at this link](#).

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov 8—Veterans Stand Down and Resource Fair—Rushmore Plaza Civic Center—Rapid City—10:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)

Nov 8—Paint the Ice at the Rapid City Rush night—6:00—8:00 pm (MT)

Nov 10—Military Appreciation Night at the Rapid City Rush—7:00 pm (MT)

Nov 11-12—Sea of Goodwill Equine Retreat—Joy Ranch—Watertown

Nov 11—Veterans Day

Nov 12—State Offices Closed

Nov 16—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs —10:00 am (MT)

Nov 16—Dakota Dunes CBOC Open House—2:00 pm (CT)

Nov 22-23—State Offices Closed

Dec 4—Governor’s Budget Address—State Capitol—1:00 pm (CT)

Dec 10—Wreaths Across America Ceremony—Flaming Fountain Veterans Memorial—Pierre—11:00 am (CT)

Dec 24-25—State Offices Closed

Dec 31—Jan 1—State Offices Closed

Jan 8—Governor’s State of the State—State Capitol—1:00 pm (CT)

Jan 13-18—VFW Accredited Service Officer Training—Annapolis, MD

Jan 18—Sioux Falls Military Appreciation Resource Fair—Central Church (Ralph Rogers Road) 10:00 am—9:00 pm (CT)

Feb 2—USS South Dakota Commissioning

Feb 8-10—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Holiday Inn—Spearfish

Mar 3-7—VFW Legislative Conference

July 20-24—National VFW Convention—Orlando, FL



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